

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, June 6, 1977

The House met at 11 a.m.

• (1110)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

HISTORIC SITES AND MONUMENTS ACT

AMENDMENT TO INCREASE NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF BOARD

Hon. Len Marchand (for Mr. Allmand) moved that Bill C-13, to amend the Historic Sites and Monuments Act, as reported (with an amendment) from the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development, be concurred in. Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: When shall the bill be read the third time? By leave, now?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Marchand (for Mr. Allmand) moved that the bill be read the third time and do pass.

Mr. B. Keith Penner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Allmand), I am pleased to make a few brief remarks on the third reading stage of this legislation, which is not a very complicated bill. Nevertheless, it is an important bill. It is not complicated in that it only seeks to do one simple thing, which is to add two more members to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. That is simple, but it is important because those representatives will come from the two territories—the Northwest Territories and the Yukon territory.

In the course of considering Bill C-13 there have been interesting debates at both second reading stage and when this bill was before the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development. When this bill came forward for debate, many members took the opportunity to talk about historic sites or persons within their own constituencies. Thus, we had an interesting cross-section sampling of Canadiana during the course of this debate.

It was said that we ought to be doing more in the House of Commons to make ourselves aware and to inform the citizens of this country about the very colourful and dramatic history which we have as a nation. Bill C-13 gave members an opportunity to refer to some of the fascinating historic events

which have taken place within their ridings, and whether they were or were not properly designated. Where there has been such an important historic event within a province, region or constituency, members would like to have it properly marked in one way or another. That is the function of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. It is always pleased to hear from members of parliament or from other Canadians concerning historic sites or historic personages which ought to be appropriately recognized through the work and functioning of this board.

The Historic Sites and Monuments Act provides that the board bearing the same name recommend to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development places, events and persons of historical significance to our country. This board has been functioning since the time of its establishment in 1919. Presently, the board is composed of 15 members, two representatives each from Ontario and Quebec and one each from the other eight provinces. As well, there is one representative from the National Museums of Canada and the Dominion Archivist, and also an officer from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, a position which happens to be vacant at the moment. The provincial representatives are usually historians or archivists of some repute. Mr. Marc Laterreur is the chairman of the board. He is also a member of the Department of History of the Faculté des Lettres of Laval University in Quebec.

In the past 20 years, on the recommendation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, more than 70 historic parks and major sites have been designated, and almost 700 persons and events of historical significance have been commemorated. Those statistics speak for themselves, Mr. Speaker. Some people may believe, if they are not as aware of the history of our nation as they ought to be, that not much has happened in our past that is of significance or import. In fact, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, through their work, has proven this to the contrary. There is a great deal in our history which is worthy of recognition. The board which examines these requests has come up with a significant number in the past 20 years: as I said, more than 70 historic parks and major sites have been designated, and almost 700 persons and events of historical significance have been commemorated.

The purpose of amending the Historic Sites and Monuments Act is to have better representation of two important parts of Canada—the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Up until now, representatives from these northern regions have attended board meetings only as observers, without the right to vote. The fact that there will now be representatives from the two territories sitting on the board is indicative of the government's